

**FIRST JOLTING ISSUE!**



**NO. 1  
SEPT**

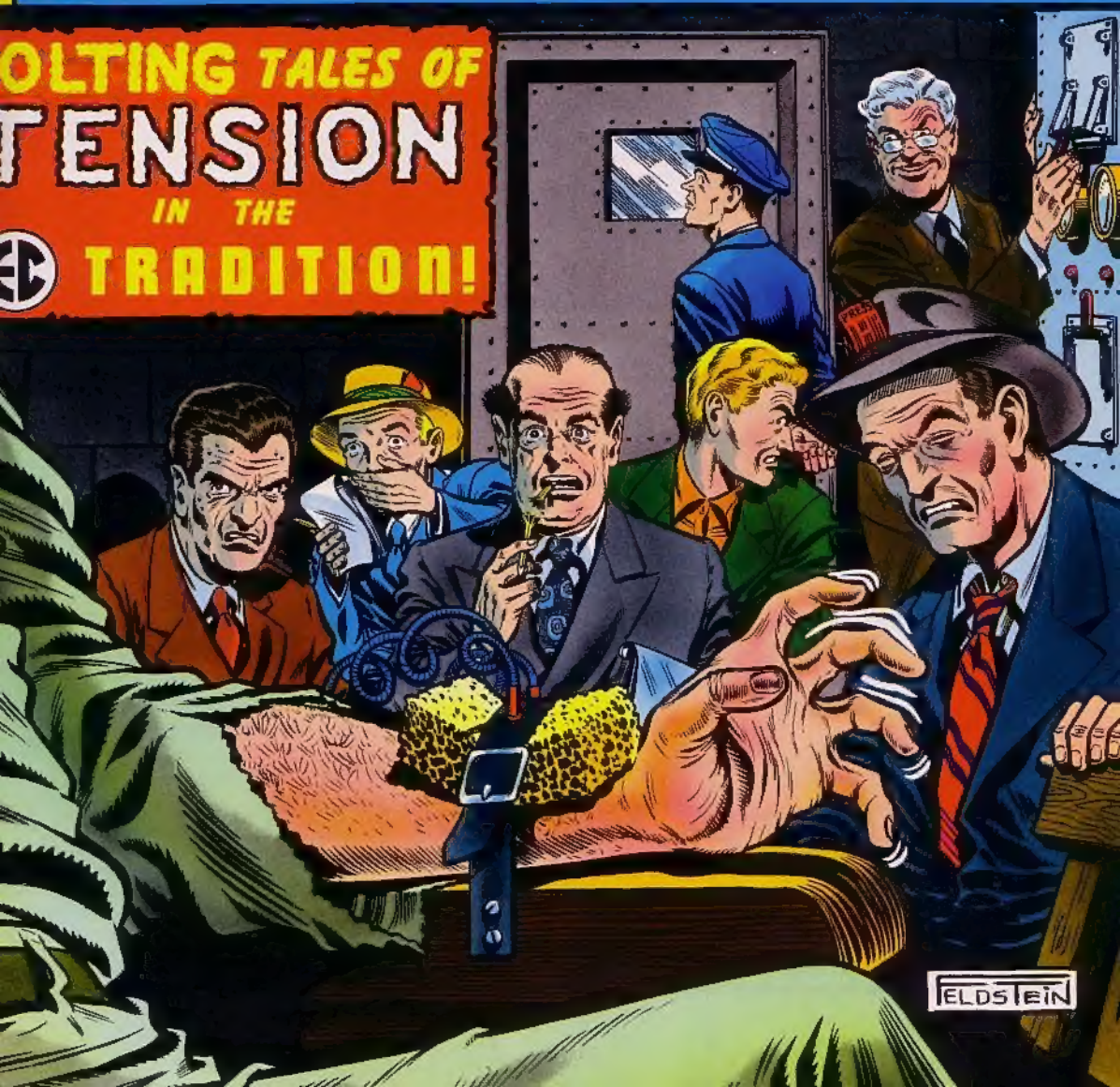


**150  
190  
CANADA**

**STOCK**

**SUSPENSTORIES**

**JOLTING TALES OF  
TENSION  
IN THE  
TRADITION!**



**ELDSTEIN**



BRACE YOURSELVES FOR THE IMPACT OF THE  
SHOCKING WIND-UP TO THIS YARN!

# THE NEAT JOB!

GOOD LORD, LADY!  
WHAT MADE YOU DO  
IT?

YOU'D BETTER TELL US  
ABOUT IT, MRS. BERDEEN!  
START FROM THE  
BEGINNING!



A CRIME  
SUSPENSE STORY

Jack  
Kamen



ELEANOR BERDEEN'S FACE WAS A RIGID WHITE MASK WITH WIDE STARING EYES! SHE GAZED BLANKLY INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE CELLARWORK SHOP! THE TWO DETECTIVES FROM HOMICIDE WAITED IN SILENCE FOR HER TO START HER STORY! WHEN SHE BEGAN TO TALK, HER VOICE WAS UNEXPRESSIVE... A LOW DREARY MONOTONE...

I...I MARRIED ARTHUR THREE YEARS AGO! I DON'T KNOW WHY I DID IT...PERHAPS I WAS AFRAID OF THE PROSPECT OF BECOMING AN OLD MAID...



...IN ANY CASE, I DID IT! I NEVER LOVED HIM! I JUST NEEDED A HUSBAND...BADLY...

HAPPY, ELEANOR?

YES, ARTHUR! VERY! BUT... WHERE WILL WE LIVE AFTER THE HONEYMOON IS OVER?



I WAS GOING TO SURPRISE YOU... BUT I MIGHT AS WELL TELL YOU NOW! I'VE PUT A DEPOSIT ON A HOUSE IN BEXELY!

OH, ARTHUR! REALLY? HOW WONDERFUL! WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? IS IT FURNISHED?



YOU'LL SEE IT, ELEANOR! I'M SURE YOU'LL LIKE IT!

OF COURSE I'LL LIKE IT ARTHUR... IF YOU BOUGHT IT FOR ME! DEAR! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE IT!



I COULDN'T WAIT FOR THE HONEYMOON TO BE OVER! FRANKLY, I WAS BORED STIFF! NEVER HAVING LOVED ARTHUR, I FOUND THE WHOLE THING QUITE DULL! I LOOKED FORWARD TO THE PLEASURE OF LIVING IN MY OWN HOUSE WITH DELIGHTFUL ANTICIPATION! FINALLY WE ARRIVED...

THERE IT IS! ISN'T IT ATTRACTIVE?

Y...YES! VERY... NICE!



I'D EXPECTED SOMETHING SMALL AND INEXPENSIVE, SINCE ARTHUR'D NOT BEEN WEALTHY...BUT I'D NEVER PICTURED ANYTHING LIKE THE HOUSE THAT LOOMED UP BEFORE ME! IT WAS ONE OF THOSE TREMENDOUS CENTURY-OLD MONSTROSITIES THAT THE VERY RICH OF THAT PERIOD HAD CONSIDERED QUITE ELEGANT! IT LOOKED HIDEOUS...

COME! LET'S GO INSIDE! IT'S COMPLETELY FURNISHED! YOU'LL ADORE IT!

YEAH! I'LL BET!



ARTHUR MADE A FEEBLE ATTEMPT TO CARRY ME ACROSS THE THRESHOLD BUT DIDN'T EXACTLY SUCCEED! AS HE STOOD BESIDE ME...BREATHING HARD...I SURVEYED THE HORROR HE'D DRAGGED ME INTO! THE PLACE WAS FURNISHED, ALL RIGHT...IN FACT IT WAS OVER-FURNISHED! EVERY AVAILABLE INCH OF SPACE WAS OCCUPIED BY SOME NAUSEATING DUST-CATCHER...

I LOVE ANTIQUES... DON'T YOU, ELEANOR?

OH...YES, ARTHUR! THEY'RE SO...SO INTERESTING!





THE MINUTE I SAW THE PLACE, I FELL IN LOVE WITH IT, ELEANOR! I WANT IT KEPT JUST EXACTLY AS IT IS... EXACTLY!

OH, I WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING, ARTHUR! EVERYTHING IS PERFECT!



I HATED THE PLACE! WHEN WE SETTLED DOWN TO A DAILY ROUTINE AND ARTHUR RETURNED TO WORK, I TRIED REARRANGING THE FURNITURE TO MAKE IT LOOK A LITTLE BETTER! BUT...THE NIGHT AFTER I DID IT...



HE GOT RED AS A BEET! HE BLEW UP! WHAT DID YOU DO? WHO TOLD YOU TO REARRANGE THE FURNITURE?

I THOUGHT IT MIGHT LOOK NICER...



YOU THOUGHT? NEVER MIND WHAT YOU THOUGHT! I TOLD YOU I WANTED THIS HOUSE LEFT EXACTLY AS IT WAS! I MEANT IT! NOW CHANGE IT ALL BACK AGAIN!

YES... ARTHUR!



IT'S FUNNY HOW YOU GET TO KNOW A MAN AFTER YOU'RE MARRIED TO HIM! SO I GOT TO KNOW ARTHUR! OH, LORD, YES! AND THE MORE I LEARNED, THE MORE I BEGAN TO DESPISE HIM...



HE WAS RIDICULOUS... A FIEND FOR NEATNESS! EVERY NIGHT HE'D COME HOME FROM WORK AND GO THROUGH HIS DRAWERS TO SEE THAT I HADN'T DISTURBED THEIR PRECISE ARRANGEMENTS...



HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU MY SHORTS GO ON THE LEFT... FOLDED IN HALF... BUTTONS UP?

YES... ARTHUR!





IT WAS MADDENING! HE'D GO THROUGH THE HOUSE ON A WHITE-GLOVE INSPECTION...

TCH...TCH! THE TOP OF THIS DOOR JAMB IS DUSTY, ELEANOR! YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO BE LESS SLOPPY WHEN YOU CLEAN!

YES... ARTHUR!



HE'D EVEN CRITICIZE THE WAY I'D SET THE TABLE...

THIS IS *NOT* THE WAY WE FOLD NAPKINS, DEAR! YOU MUST LEARN TO DO IT *RIGHT*!

YES... ARTHUR!



IT GOT WORSE AND WORSE...

LOOK AT THIS TABLE, ELEANOR! THERE'S DUST ON IT! YOU'LL HAVE TO BE NEATER THAN THAT!

YES... ARTHUR!



'BY OUR FIRST ANNIVERSARY, HE'D MADE A NERVOUS WRECK OUT OF ME! IT WAS ABOUT THAT TIME THAT HE'D BEGUN BUILDING HIS WORKSHOP HERE IN THE CELLAR...'

WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE, ARTHUR?

YOU'LL SEE, DEAR!



YES! AND IT'S GOING TO STAY THAT WAY, TOO! TAKE LESSONS FROM THE WAY I KEEP *THIS* PLACE, DEAR! YOU'LL SEE WHAT NEATNESS AND ORDERLINESS MEAN!

YES, ARTHUR!



'HE'D SPENT A SMALL FORTUNE ON THE MACHINE TOOLS HE'D INSTALLED IN THE WORKSHOP! HE'D BOUGHT EVERY GADGET AVAILABLE!'

HOW DO YOU LIKE IT, DEAR?

IT LOOKS VERY NICE, DEAR!



'OH, LORD, HE KEPT THAT WORKSHOP NEAT! EVERYTHING HAD A SPECIFIC PLACE WHERE IT WAS KEPT, STORED, OR HUNG! HE HAD SHELVES OF JARS, EACH LABELED CAREFULLY, WHERE TINY SCREWS, NUTS, AND OTHER ITEMS WERE SORTED AND FILED...'

I KNOW WHERE *EVERYTHING* IS! *EVERYTHING*! THAT'S NEATNESS, ELEANOR!

YES, ARTHUR!





**'BY THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR I WAS READY TO WALK OUT...CHUCK EVERYTHING AND LEAVE! HE'D MOVED INTO THE KITCHEN WITH HIS PERVERTED MANIA FOR ORDERLINESS...**

**ELEANOR! YOU USED A CAN OF TOMATO SOUP AND DIDN'T CHECK IT OFF THE LIST! AND YOU DIDN'T FILL IN THE EMPTY PLACE WITH ONE FROM THE BACK!**

**I...I FORGOT, ARTHUR!**



**'HIS IDIOTIC CHECK-LISTS SLAYED ME! HE HAD ONE FOR THE FOOD WHICH HE KEPT IN THE PANTRY! IT WAS AN INVENTORY OF THE CANNED GOODS! WHEN I USED A CAN, I WAS SUPPOSED TO CHECK IT OFF THE LIST SO IT COULD BE REPLACED...**

**HMMM! RUNNING LOW ON RHUBARB, I SEE!**



**'HE KEPT ANOTHER ONE IN THE BATHROOM ON THE INSIDE OF THE MEDICINE CABINET DOOR! IT LISTED ALL THE DRUGS AND THEIR QUANTITIES! REGULARLY HE'D COUNT THE PILLS IN THE BOTTLES!**

**ELEANOR! YOU USED TWO ASPIRIN TABLETS AND DIDN'T CHECK THEM OFF!**



**'THEN HE'D MOVED INTO MY BEDROOM...CRITICIZING THE WAY I KEPT MY CLOSET...**

**HANGERS SHOULD ALL HOOK OVER THE ROD FROM THE FRONT! AND YOUR CLOTHES SHOULD ALL HANG THE SAME WAY... BUTTON SIDE FACING LEFT! THAT'S NEATNESS!**

**YES, ARTHUR!**



**YOU FORGOT? THAT'S NO EXCUSE! YOU MUSTN'T FORGET! DON'T LET IT HAPPEN AGAIN!**

**YES, ARTHUR!**



**HE EVEN STARTED ORGANIZING THE WAY I KEPT THE KITCHEN UTENSILS...**

**FROM NOW ON, POTS AND PANS WILL BE KEPT IN THEIR PROPER PLACES IN THE CUPBOARD! NO MORE THROWING THEM HAPHAZARDLY INTO THE STOVE!**



**'HE ASSAILED MY DRAWERS....'**

**KEEP YOUR UNDIES TO THE RIGHT... STOCKINGS IN SMALL BOXES... SWEATERS TO THE LEFT... BLOUSES IN THE MIDDLE...**

**YES, ARTHUR!**





'THEN HE'D CHECKED TO SEE IF HIS ORDERS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT...'

YOU CALLED ME, ARTHUR?

ELEANOR! YOU'VE GOT A PAIR OF BLACK PUMPS IN AMONG THE BROWN SHOES IN THE SHOE RACK! LORD, WILL YOU EVER LEARN TO BE NEAT? BROWN SHOES ON ONE SHELF...BLACK BELOW!



'SOMETIMES...SOMETIMES I FELT LIKE...'

ELEANOR! THIS MAGAZINE IS UPSIDE DOWN IN THE STAND! TITLES UP...COVERS OUT...PLEASE!

YES... ARTHUR!



'ONE DAY, I NEEDED A THUMB TACK AND HAD SEARCHED ARTHUR'S WORKSHOP FOR ONE! THAT NIGHT...'

ELEANOR! WERE YOU DOWN HERE IN MY WORKSHOP?

Y...YES, ARTHUR! I NEEDED A...



KEEP OUT OF HERE, UNDERSTAND?

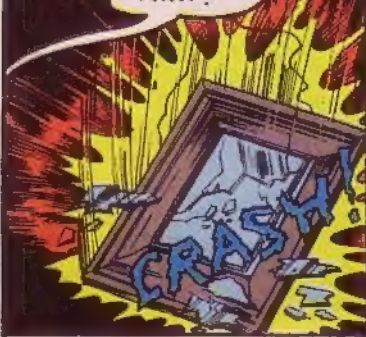
THIS IS THE ONE PLACE I CAN KEEP NEAT! DON'T YOU COME AROUND SLOPPING IT UP WITH YOUR MESSY WAYS... DO YOU HEAR? I FORBID YOU TO COME DOWN HERE AGAIN!

YES, ARTHUR!



'THEN, YESTERDAY...A PICTURE'D COME LOOSE FROM THE WALL! THE NAIL THAT HELD IT WAS SO OLD, IT JUST BENT AND AND...'

WHAT WAS THAT?



'I'D RUSHED DOWN TO THE GLAZIER TO HAVE THE BROKEN PICTURE GLASS REPLACED AND RETURNED BEFORE ARTHUR'D GOTTEN HOME...'

I'VE GOT TO HANG IT BACK UP AGAIN OR HE'LL HAVE A FIT!



'I WENT DOWN TO THE CELLAR AND TOOK A HAMMER! I NOTED CAREFULLY WHERE I'D TAKEN IT FROM, SO I COULD REPLACE IT EXACTLY RIGHT...'

HE'LL BE STEAMING IF HE FINDS OUT!





'THEN I'D TAKEN DOWN ONE OF THE HUNDREDS OF LABELED JARS THAT LINED THE SHELVES... ONE WITH NAILS THAT LOOKED LIKE THE RIGHT SIZE...'

JUST ONE NAIL! HE SURELY HASN'T COUNTED THESE!



'I TOOK A NAIL OUT OF THE JAR AND STARTED TO PUT IT BACK IN ITS PROPER PLACE ON THE SHELF, WHEN...'

OH, MY GOD! EEEEE...



THE JAR SHATTERED INTO A THOUSAND PIECES ON THE CEMENT CELLAR FLOOR AND THE NAILS LAY SCATTERED CRAZILY ABOUT! FOR A MOMENT I STARED AT THE MESS... DUMBFOUNDED...

THEN I BEGAN TO CRY! THE TENSION...THE NERVOUSNESS OF VIOLATING ARTHUR'S WORKSHOP-SANCTUARY WAS TOO MUCH FOR ME! SUDDENLY... UPSTAIRS... A DOOR SLAMMED!

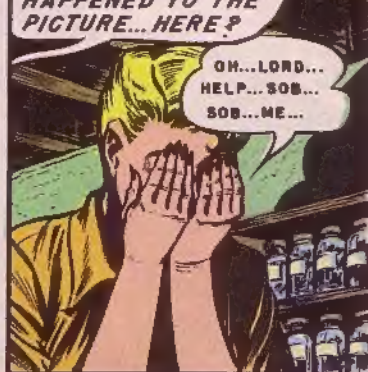
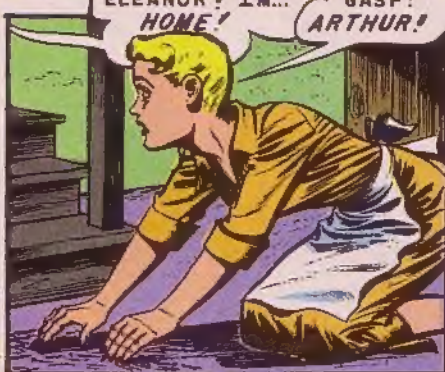
ELEANOR? I'M... HOME!

GASP! ARTHUR!

I LISTENED TO HIM MOVING THROUGH THE HOUSE! I HEARD HIM STOP FOR A MOMENT! THEN I HEARD HIM SHOUT...

ELEANOR! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE PICTURE... HERE?

OH...LORD... HELP... SOB... SOB... ME...



I COULD HEAR HIM STAMPING TOWARD THE CELLAR DOOR! HE WAS ANGRY! I COULD TELL! I WAS FRIGHTENED! WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN HE FOUND ME...AND THE BROKEN JAR...

ELEANOR! YOU DOWN THERE? ARE YOU IN MY WORKSHOP? ARE YOU... WHAT... WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

PLEASE, ARTHUR! DON'T BE ANGRY! I WAS ONLY TRYING...TO...

HE GLARED AT THE BROKEN JAR AND THE NAILS SCATTERED OVER THE WORKSHOP FLOOR! HIS FACE GREW RED...HIS EYES BLAZED...

I TOLD YOU TO KEEP OUT OF HERE...DIDN'T I?

I WANTED...TO HANG THE PICTURE BACK UP...SO YOU WOULDN'T BE...ANGRY...





**HIS FACE WAS CRIMSON! HE RAVED WILDLY...** YOU WANTED TO HANG THE PICTURE UP...SO YOU CAME DOWN HERE FOR A NAIL, EH? ONLY YOU **BROKE THE JAR, EH?** SLOPPY...SLOPPY ELEANOR... **BROKE THE JAR!**



**I FELT EVERYTHING SPINNING... MY FACE GREW HOT...MY CHEEKS BURNED...**

**CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING NEAT? CAN'T YOU? CAN'T YOU?**



**CAN'T YOU DO ANYTHING NEAT?**



**I BACKED AWAY AND MY HAND CLOSED ON SOMETHING... A HANDLE OF ONE OF ARTHUR'S TOOLS! I PULLED IT FROM ITS PLACE AS EVERYTHING WENT BLACK...**



**ELEANOR!**

**ELEANOR NODDED TO THE LITTLE PILE OF NAILS, SCREWS, AND ODD ITEMS THAT SHE'D EMPTIED OUT OF THE ROWS OF JARS...**



**I REMEMBER DOING THAT! I REMEMBER WANTING TO SHOW HIM I COULD BE NEAT! I REMEMBER I WANTED IT TO BE A NEAT JOB! I CLEANED UP EVERYTHING WHEN I WAS FINISHED!**

**THE DETECTIVES FROM HOMICIDE TURNED TOWARD THE ROWS OF JARS THAT LINED THE SHELVES! EACH ONE WAS IN ITS PLACE, BUT ARTHUR'S PRECISE CAREFULLY LETTERED LABELS HAD BEEN REPLACED BY NEW ONES IN ELEANOR'S NERVOUS SCRAWL! THEY EACH BRIEFLY DESCRIBED THE CONTENTS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE JARS...**



**LOOK FOR YOURSELVES! I CLEANED UP THE BLOOD... EVERY DROP!**

**YEAH, LADY! YOU CERTAINLY DID A NEAT JOB!**

**CHOKES... VERY NEAT!**

**THE END**



HERE IS A TALE OF TENSION WITH AN ELECTRIFYING FINISH!

# YELLOW!

**A WAR  
SUSPENSE STORY**



COLONEL CLARK HENDERSON STUDIED THE MULTI-COLORED TERRAIN MAP THAT HUNG ON THE BATTERED WALL OF THE LOW BOMB-SCARRED BUILDING HE'D CHOSEN AS HIS TEMPORARY HEADQUARTERS! IN THE DISTANCE, MUFFLED EXPLOSIONS DENOTED THE CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE ENEMY ARTILLERY...

GET ME HEADQUARTERS ON THE PHONE, SERGEANT... RIGHT AWAY!

SORRY, SIR! CAN'T SEEM TO GET THROUGH! OUR LINES MUST BE CUT!

THE COLONEL CURSED ANGRILY AND STRODE TO THE OPEN DOORWAY WHERE A SENTRY STOOD AT ATTENTION.

GET CAPTAIN MILLIKEN OF "B" COMPANY OVER HERE, IMMEDIATELY! TELL HIM IT'S URGENT!

YES, SIR!





THE COLONEL STRODE BACK TO HIS DESK, LIT A CIGARETTE, AND PUFFED IT ANXIOUSLY! FINALLY, CAPTAIN MILLIKEN STEPPED THROUGH THE DOORWAY AND SALUTED SHARPLY! COLONEL HENDERSON RETURNED THE SALUTE...

YOU SENT FOR ME, COLONEL?

AT EASE, CAPTAIN! YOU CAN SMOKE IF YOU LIKE!



COLONEL HENDERSON POINTED TO THE MAP...HIS FACE GRIM...

THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS, CAPTAIN! THE GERMANS HAVE BROKEN THROUGH HERE... HERE...AND HERE! THEY'VE COMPLETELY BY-PASSED OUR LEFT FLANK AND HAVE BEGUN MOVING THROUGH THE HEDGEROWS AT OUR REAR!



SERGEANT MAURER, HERE, REPORTS THAT COMMUNICATION WITH HEADQUARTERS IS IMPOSSIBLE, WHICH PROBABLY MEANS THEY'VE LOCATED OUR PHONE LINES AND CUT THEM!

LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TRYING TO SURROUND US, SIR!



EXACTLY! I WANT THOSE PHONE LINES REPAIRED, CAPTAIN... AT ANY COST! WE'VE GOT TO GET THROUGH TO HEADQUARTERS FOR HELP BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

YES, SIR! I'LL ORDER A SQUAD OUT AT ONCE!



GOOD! OH, BY THE WAY, CAPTAIN! HOW'S MARTIN... ER... MY SON, LIEUTENANT HENDERSON, DOING? THIS IS HIS FIRST TIME IN COMBAT!

MAY I BE FRANK, SIR?



WHY...YES! GO AHEAD! WHAT IS IT?

WELL, SIR! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO PUT THIS...BUT...WELL, SOME OF THE MEN IN HIS PLATOON ARE GRUMBLING! HIS SERGEANT, WHO'S AN OLD TIMER, TOLD ME...WELL...HE CALLED YOUR SON...THAT IS...



WELL, MAN! SPEAK UP! WHAT DID HE CALL HIM?

HE CALLED HIM 'YELLOW', SIR! HE ASKED TO BE TRANSFERRED TO A DIFFERENT PLATOON! HE SAID LIEUTENANT HENDERSON IS A COWARD...SIR!





COLONEL HENDERSON STUDIED CAPTAIN MILLIKEN... SHOCKED AT WHAT HE'D JUST HEARD! THEN HE BEGAN TO SPEAK... HIS VOICE WAS LOW AND HUSKY... WITH A GRIM DETERMINED TONE...

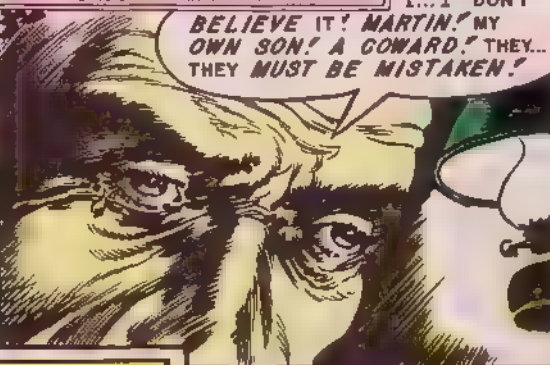
THAT MISSION, CAPTAIN! THE ONE I JUST ASSIGNED TO YOU! I WANT LIEUTENANT HENDERSON TO LEAD THAT SQUAD ON IT! IS THAT CLEAR?

Y-YES, SIR!



COLONEL HENDERSON SALUTED SHARPLY, DISMISSING THE CAPTAIN! AS MILLIKEN DISAPPEARED OUT OF THE OPEN DOORWAY, THE COLONEL SANK INTO HIS CHAIR SLOWLY... STARING BLANKLY AFTER HIM! HIS EYES GLOUDED... REFLECTING THE LIGHT OF THE KEROSENE LAMP OVERHEAD...

I... I DON'T BELIEVE IT! MARTIN! MY OWN SON! A COWARD! THEY... THEY MUST BE MISTAKEN!



COLONEL HENDERSON SAT, HEAD IN HANDS, FOR SOME TIME... LISTENING TO THE DISTANT DULL REPORTS OF THE ENEMY BARRAGE! SUDDENLY THE GRUNTING FOOTSTEPS OF MARCHING MEN OUTSIDE MADE HIM LEAP TO HIS FEET! A SQUAD ON A MISSION WAS PASSING BY...

LIEUTENANT HENDERSON!



THE COLONEL WATCHED THE YOUNG LIEUTENANT BREAK FROM THE HEAD OF THE SQUAD AND MOVE TOWARD HIM! MARTIN HENDERSON... LIEUTENANT... INFANTRY... U.S. ARMY! HIS SON!

YOU HAVE YOUR ORDERS, LIEUTENANT?

YES, SIR!



SEE THAT YOU CARRY THEM OUT, LIEUTENANT!

YES, SIR!



THE COLONEL WATCHED THE SQUAD MOVE OFF IN THE DARKNESS! HE WHISPERED UNDER HIS BREATH AFTER THEM...

MAKE ME PROUD OF YOU, MY BOY! SHOW THEM THEY'RE WRONG ABOUT YOU! SHOW THEM YOU'RE NO COWARD!



OVERHEAD, A SHELL WHINED INTO THE NIGHT, EXPLODING OFF TO THE WEST! THE COLONEL TURNED AND REENTERED THE SHELL-MARRED BUILDING AND SAT DOWN TO WAIT...

IF I DON'T GET THROUGH TO HEADQUARTERS SOON, WE'LL BE SITTING-DUCKS OUT HERE!





IT WAS TOWARD MORNING WHEN  
LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON  
STUMBLED INTO THE COLONEL'S  
HEADQUARTERS, GASPING FOR  
BREATH...

MARTY! MY  
BOY! WHAT  
HAPPENED?

AMBUSH! GASP...  
WIPE OUT THE  
WHOLE SQUAD...  
GASP... MANAGED TO  
GET AWAY!



THE LINES!  
DID YOU  
REPAIR THE  
LINES?

COULDN'T!  
GASP... THEY  
WERE WAITING  
FOR US... GASP!  
IT WAS A TRAP!  
SOB... SOB...



THE COLONEL MADE A MOVE TO  
COMFORT HIS TREMBLING SON!  
SUDDENLY, A SOUND IN THE DOOR-  
WAY MADE HIM LOOK UP! CAPTAIN  
MILLIKEN STOOD THERE, SUPPORTING  
A WOUNDED DISHEVELED BLEEDING  
SERGEANT...

CAPTAIN! I... I...  
WHAT'S HAP-  
PENED TO THE  
SERGEANT,  
THERE?

TELL HIM,  
HEFNER! GO  
AHEAD! TELL  
HIM!



THE SERGEANT LIFTED HIS EYES... STARING AT THE  
COLONEL'S TREMBLING SON! HE GRIMACED IN PAIN...  
COUGHING UP BLOOD...

HE... HE RAN OUT ON US!  
HE LEFT US... TO FIGHT  
THEM OFF... COUGH... WHILE  
HE HIGH-TAILED IT OUT  
OF THERE!

WHAT? IS THAT  
TRUE, LIEUTENANT?

NO! NO!



THE COLONEL'S FACE SHOWED NO EMOTION AS HE  
NODDED...

IF THAT IS YOUR CHARGE, CAPTAIN  
MILLIKEN, LIEUTENANT HENDERSON  
WILL STAND TRIAL...  
IMMEDIATELY!

ON YOUR FEET,  
LIEUTENANT!



IT IS TRUE! IT... COUGH...  
COUGH... IT IS! HE'S  
YELLOW! YELLOW!  
YELLOW! YELLOW!

AS LIEUTENANT HENDERSON'S  
COMMANDING OFFICER,  
SIR, I INSIST HE BE  
PLACED UNDER ARREST  
TO FACE COURT-MARTIAL...  
FOR NEGLECT OF DUTY  
AND DESERTION OF HIS  
MEN WHILE UNDER FIRE!



LIEUTENANT HENDERSON LOOKED AT HIS FATHER...  
HIS EYES PLEADING! THE COLONEL TURNED AWAY...

COURT-MARTIAL WILL  
CONVENE IN TWENTY-  
MINUTES, CAPTAIN!  
NOTIFY THE OTHER  
OFFICERS THAT ARE  
AVAILABLE!

YES, SIR!  
LET'S GO,  
LIEUTENANT!

SOB...  
SOB...





**TWENTY MINUTES LATER, A COURT-MARTIAL HEARD THE CHARGES AGAINST LIEUTENANT HENDERSON...**

**LIEUTENANT HENDERSON! HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY IN YOUR DEFENSE BEFORE THIS COURT PASSES JUDGEMENT UPON YOU?**

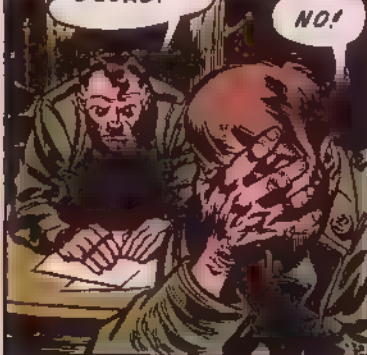
**N...NO, SIR!**



**THE COLONEL CONTINUED! HE LOWERED HIS GAZE SO HE WOULD NOT HAVE TO SEE THE LOOK IN HIS SON'S EYES...**

**THE PENALTY FOR THIS OFFENSE, LIEUTENANT, IS DEATH BY A FIRING SQUAD!**

**NO!**



**I HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO ORDER THE PENALTY TO BE CARRIED OUT!**

**DAD! HOW COULD YOU? HOW COULD YOU? SOB...**



**THE COLONEL LIFTED HIS EYES AND WATCHED HIS SON BEGIN TO CRY...**

**IN VIEW OF THE SITUATION AT HAND... THE EXECUTION WILL TAKE PLACE AT 0600... TWO HOURS FROM NOW!**

**SOB...SOB... SOB...**



**THEY TOOK MARTIN HENDERSON AWAY! THE COLONEL LIT A CIGARETTE! THE OTHER OFFICERS OF THE COURT-MARTIAL GOT UP SILENTLY! ONE OF THEM LEANED OVER AND SPOKE TO THE COLONEL...**

**I'M...SORRY, SIR! I...KNOW HOW TOUGH THIS MUST BE FOR YOU!**

**GOT TO BE DONE, MAJOR! DISCIPLINE MUST BE MAINTAINED! WE MAY HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT OF HERE YET...**



**...AND WE CAN'T HAVE ANY OF OUR MEN LOSING FAITH IN THEIR COMMANDING OFFICERS, EH? DON'T YOU AGREE, CAPTAIN?**

**YES, SIR!**

**GOOD MORNING, SIR!**





AS DAWN LIT UP THE OVERCAST SKY, AND THE ENEMY BARRAGE BEGAN ANEW, A FIRING SQUAD MOVED TOWARD THE SMALL HOUSE THAT HOUSED LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON! SUDDENLY THE COLONEL DROPPED FROM HIS HEAD-QUARTERS...

BEFORE YOU TAKE HIM, CAPTAIN... I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO HIM!

YES, SIR!

THE COLONEL ENTERED THE GUARDED BUILDING... MOTIONING THE SENTRY TO MOVE OUTSIDE! HIS SON LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH A TEAR-STAINED FACE...

GO AWAY! I HATE YOU!

YOU LET ME DOWN, MARTIN! I WANTED TO BE PROUD OF YOU!

YOU WANTED TO BE PROUD OF ME! THAT'S ALL YOU EVER WANTED! YOU DIDN'T CARE HOW I FELT! ALL YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WAS YOUR OWN POMPOUS SELF!

I'M ASHAMED OF YOU, MARTIN! YOU'RE A COWARD!

SURE I'M A COWARD! SOB... I WAS SCARED STIFF! I RAN! YOU BET I RAN! SOB... AND I'M SCARED NOW, TOO! I DON'T WANT TO DIE! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

SHUT UP, YOU FOOL! YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE!

I... I'M NOT? YOU... YOU'RE GOING TO FIX IT?

IT'S FIXED! LISTEN AND LISTEN CAREFULLY! IN AN HOUR I'M GIVING ORDERS TO PULL OUT! YOU'LL BE LEFT BEHIND... SO YOU'LL BE ON YOUR OWN!

BUT THE FIRING SQUAD! THEY'RE OUTSIDE!

THEIR RIFLES ARE LOADED WITH BLANKS! WHEN MILLIKEN GIVES THE ORDER TO FIRE, YOU FALL... AND LAY STILL, FOR GOD'S SAKE! YOU'LL BE LEFT FOR DEAD! I WON'T GIVE THEM A CHANCE TO BURY YOU!

BLANKS!

YES! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU... AND FRANKLY, I DON'T CARE! MAYBE SOMEDAY WE'LL MEET AGAIN! GOOD-BYE, MARTIN!



COLONEL HENDERSON TURNED AND WENT OUT OF THE SHACK...

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN!

OKAY, LIEUTENANT! LET'S GO!



LIEUTENANT MARTIN HENDERSON MARCHED BESIDE THE FIRING SQUAD TO THE LOW HILL THEY'D CHOSEN! HE SEEMED A LITTLE CALMER NOW...

O'JA HEAR? HE CRIED ALL NIGHT!

YELLOW BELLY!

HE DON'T SEEM SO SCARED NOW!



THE SQUAD HALTED SOME YARDS FROM THE ENBANKMENT, AND THE LIEUTENANT AND THE CAPTAIN CONTINUED ON! SEVERAL OFFICERS STOOD TO ONE SIDE, WATCHING THE SCENE...

ANY LAST REQUEST, LIEUTENANT?

I'D LIKE A CIGARETTE, CAPTAIN!



THE CAPTAIN PLACED A CIGARETTE IN LIEUTENANT HENDERSON'S MOUTH AND LIT IT! THE LIEUTENANT PUFFED IT SLOWLY...

WOULD YOU PREFER TO BE BLINDFOLDED, LIEUTENANT?

NO, THANKS! I'LL WATCH!



THE CAPTAIN RETURNED TO THE FIRING SQUAD AND BARKED THE ORDER TO GET READY! MARTIN HENDERSON SEARCHED THE OBSERVERS, FINALLY FINDING HIS FATHER! HE GRINNED AT HIM...

AIM!

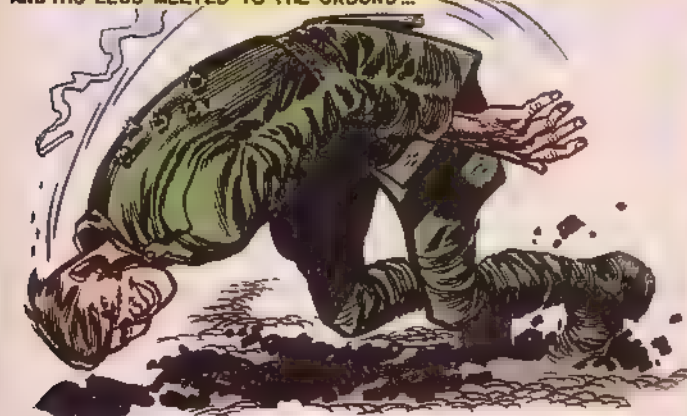


THE COLONEL SMILED SLIGHTLY AT HIS SON, WHO WINKED BACK KNOWINGLY...

FIRE!



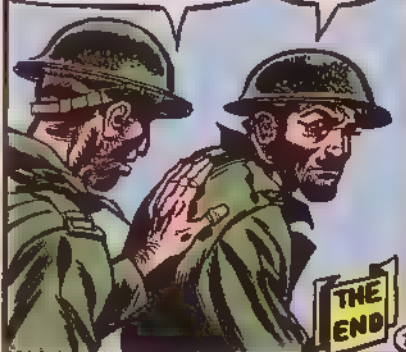
THE FIRING SQUAD'S RIFLES BARKED AND THE 30 CALIBRE LEAD SLUGS RIPPED THROUGH THE LIEUTENANT'S BODY... KILLING HIM INSTANTLY! THE GRIN FROZE ON HIS FACE AS HIS EYES GLAZED AND HIS LEGS MELTED TO THE GROUND...



AS THE COLONEL TURNED AWAY, THE CAPTAIN PATTED HIM ON THE BACK...

AT LEAST YOU CAN BE PROUD OF THE FACT THAT YOUR SON FACED HIS DEATH LIKE A MAN, SIR!

I... FELT THAT HE WOULD, CAPTAIN!







## LAST WILL

His uncle planned to change the provisions of his Will. Young Canfield had the information first-hand from his uncle's lawyer ... last week's bitter fight was undoubtedly the reason. At all costs he must keep that last Will and Testament from being altered, Canfield thought to himself. For years he had looked forward to inheriting one-half of his uncle's vast estate, and now this last-minute change of mind, occasioned by their furious disagreement, threatened to cut off young Canfield without a dollar!

The knob turned easily under Canfield's hand; the door opened noiselessly and he stepped into his uncle's second floor library. The old man looked up in bewilderment, his hawk-eyes glittering suspiciously.

"W-What do you ... ?"

Before he could complete the question, his nephew had lunged across the room and scooped up the massive iron paperweight which dominated one side of the desk. Without pausing for an instant, young Canfield hurled it directly at his uncle's head. There was a sickening *crunch* ... then the old man, his head a bleeding pulp, lurched to his feet. His lips worked spasmodically, but not a sound issued forth. The old man sprawled his length on the carpet.

Trying to avoid the blood which spurted from the old man's fatal wound, Canfield lugged the corpse out of the library. His hands around the old man's ankles, he was dragging his victim up the wooden attic steps when he heard a curious fluttering sound. Startled,

young Canfield whirled and saw a sheet of paper settling to the floor at the base of the attic steps. *Something the old man must've been writing at the moment I interrupted him*, Canfield thought to himself. *I'll get it ... and burn it ... after I've stowed the body in the attic!*

It was ten minutes later that young Canfield, satisfied with the hiding place he had found for the body, started to descend from the attic. On the very first step his foot encountered a slick spot and his legs shot out from under him. With his arms flailing and a scream of surprise issuing from his lips, Canfield plunged headlong down the stairway. He and his shrill wail stopped simultaneously on the landing below the attic. A look of surprise seemed to animate Canfield's face, but except for *that* he remained strangely still. His neck was broken.

From the back of Canfield's head, where it had struck the solid floor, blood oozed in a thin trickle. It merged with the rapidly darkening trail which made a distinct path from the inside of the old man's library to the attic above. It was his uncle's blood ... warm and still fluid ... on which young Canfield had skidded. Ironically, it was his victim's own blood which led to young Canfield's sudden downfall! And to his *death!*

Inches from his stiffening fingers lay the sheet of paper which Canfield's uncle had clutched even after life had left his body. Across it, in a wavering handwriting, were the words:

"Knowing that I cannot survive this most recent stroke, I, Wendell Canfield, do hereby alter my last Will and Testament, as dictated to my lawyers only two days ago. To my impetuous nephew, Meredith Canfield, I therefore leave my *entire estate* ..."



## ALIBI!

As they trudged through the rain in single file, Merrick thought to himself: *it was right HERE, only a month ago, that the two prospectors' bodies were discovered. The story going around was that the poor dirt-eaters had been overrun by the band of killers who roamed these lowlands. The two miners had been strangled to death, their gold dust stolen. Just the alibi Merrick needed!*

Merrick's eyes slowly focused on the rain-soaked shirt weaving in front of him. They were each toting a thousand dollars in dust... be awful nice if Merrick could finish this job with *both* thousands! The idea had been fermenting in his mind for weeks, and the memory of those two strangled prospectors crystallized the thought. Stealthily Merrick glanced about him: not a soul in sight... not even tumbleweed scudding across the rain-swept horizon! It was now or never!

The fight was more gruelling than he had expected... his partner had somehow anticipated the downward plunge of Merrick's axe, for he swerved at the last moment and the blade skidded past his skull. Weak as they were from weeks of maggoty food and makeshift shelter... from hours of arduous toil in the searing sun and the lashing of sudden and tempestuous rainstorms... the two men were able to call on hidden reserves of strength which even *they* did not know existed. For it was obvious from the first moment of onslaught that only one of them would survive!

It seemed agonized hours later that Merrick's fingers finally tightened around his partner's throat, and he felt the man sag and slump lifelessly. The epic struggle had completely exhausted him... his clothing was tat-

tered and blood-flecked, his lacerated arms hung limply at his sides. Slowly, painfully, he wobbled to his feet and opened the soggy knapsack which had fallen to the ground. His mud-caked face relaxed in a haggard grin as he removed a long strip of damp leather. Nice of his partner to carry it along and furnish Merrick with such a wonderful *alibi!*

At last Merrick's fumbling fingers completed their task: the leathery noose circled tightly around his victim's throat. Then Merrick wrapped the remaining leather strip around his own throat. Not tight enough to choke, yet firmly enough to appear as if *that* was its purpose. After he had buried the gold in an obscurely marked grave, he sank to the wet ground beside his dead partner. A fleeting thought ran through his mind before he dozed off into exhausted sleep: other miners, soon passing along this path, would find the two bodies and conclude that once again the marauding killers had struck. They would rejoice at Merrick's survival... and he could return later to recover the fortune!

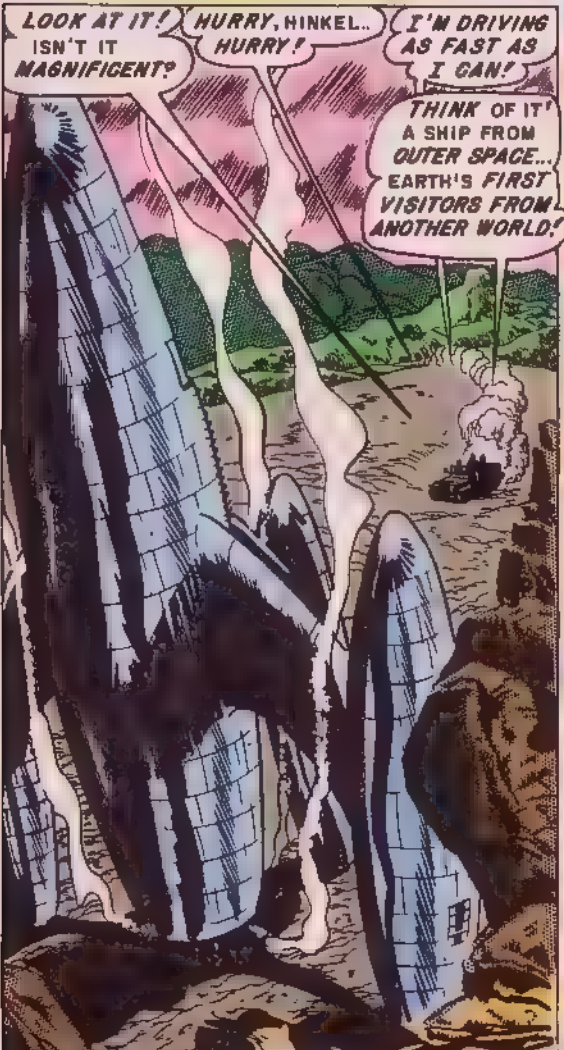
Ageons later he awoke, conscious of fiery heat drumming against his flesh. The rain had stopped; the sun burned down mercilessly. Instinctively he reached for the noose at his neck, knowing he had to relieve the drowning sensation which enveloped him. Instinctively he clawed at the leather strip... frantically he tried to gulp air. But even though his life depended on it, Merrick was too exhausted to tear it free. Then he understood: his partner's leather had been *rawhide*, which shrinks in the sun after it has been dampened! He had been too groggy to notice what kind of leather it had been... and now it was closing around his throat... tighter... tighter...



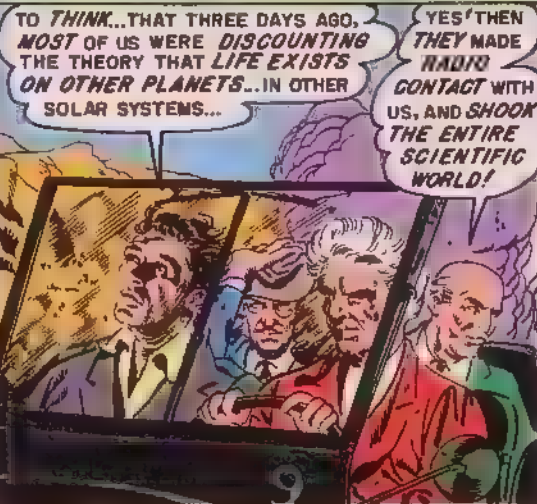
THIS SCIENCE-FICTION STORY WITH ITS  
SURPRISE ENDING SHOULD GIVE YOU A JOLT!

# THE MONSTERS!

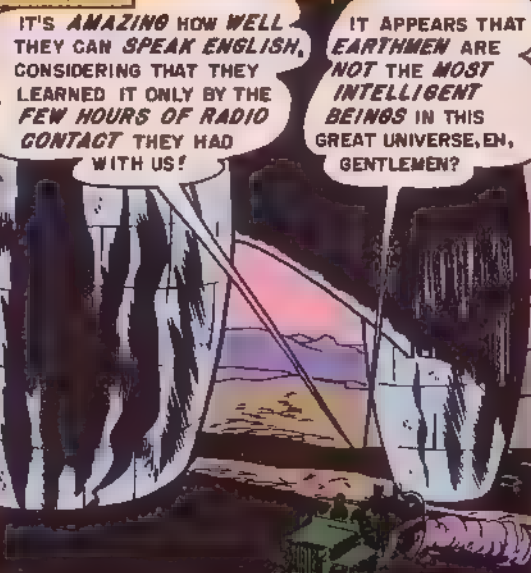
THE HUGE GLEAMING NEEDLE-SHAPED SPACE-SHIP  
STOOD LIKE A GIGANTIC FINGER POINTING SKYWARD!  
ITS ROCKET TUBES STILL GLOWED RED-HOT FROM THE  
LANDING THAT HAD JUST BEEN COMPLETED! OFF ON  
THE HORIZON, A TINY CLOUD OF DUST ROSE...DRIFTING  
LAZILY...KICKED UP BY A JEEP SPEEDING ACROSS THE  
ARID WASTES TOWARD THE ALIEN CRAFT...



THE DUSTY JEEP WITH ITS FOUR OCCUPANTS  
BOUNCED AND ROLLED ON THE PARCHED NEW MEXICO  
DESERT SANDS, NEARING THE SILVER SPACE-GIANT...



THE JEEP ROLLED TO A STOP BELOW THE TOWER-  
ING SHIP...



A SCIENCE-FICTION SUSPENSE STORY



THE OCCUPANTS OF THE JEEP GOT OUT AND STOOD SQUINTING UP AT THE SHINING SPACE-SHIP...

I WONDER IF THEY'RE VERY MUCH LIKE US?

WE'LL SOON SEE!

FUNNY! SHIP'S LOCKED UP TIGHT!

HELLO, UP THERE!

STILL NO SOUND CAME FROM THE SHIP! THEN...SUDDENLY... A PORT IN ITS SIDE OPENED AND A LARGE METAL SPHERE WAS LOWERED SLOWLY TO THE GROUND...

NOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

SEARCH ME! PERHAPS THAT'S ONE OF THEM!

AWFULLY CLUMSY SPACE-SUIT!

AS SOON AS THE SPHERE TOUCHED THE SANDY SURFACE, A LOUDSPEAKER BOOMED FROM THE SPACE-CRAFT...

EARTHLINGS! GO BACK! WE ARE TAKING OFF!

NO! WAIT!

WHAT'S WRONG? NOT ARMED!

IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT! IT IS JUST THAT WE HAVE CHANGED OUR MINDS! WE ARE LEAVING!

BUT THERE MUST BE SOME EXPLANATION! WE SPENT THREE DAYS ARRANGING FOR THIS LANDING! ARE THERE TOO MANY OF US EARTHMEN HERE?

IT IS NOT THAT! YOU TOLD US YOU WOULD HAVE FOUR! NO, IT IS NOT THAT! NOW GET IN YOUR VEHICLE AND GO BACK!

BUT YOU ARE SO MUCH MORE ADVANCED SCIENTIFICALLY THAN WE! TO LET YOU GO NOW, WOULD MEAN GIVING UP A THOUSAND YEARS OF PROGRESS FOR US ON EARTH! THERE IS SO MUCH YOU COULD TEACH US...SO MUCH WE COULD LEARN!

YES, IT IS REGRETTABLE... FOR YOU! PERHAPS WE CAN SIMPLIFY OUR REASONS FOR LEAVING SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THEM!

NO SOUND CAME FROM THE SHIP! THE FOUR SCIENTISTS THAT HAD BEEN CHOSEN TO GREET THE OUTER SPACE VISITORS LOOKED AT EACH OTHER...

THINK SOMETHING'S WRONG?

WE'VE FOLLOWED THEIR INSTRUCTIONS TO THE LETTER!

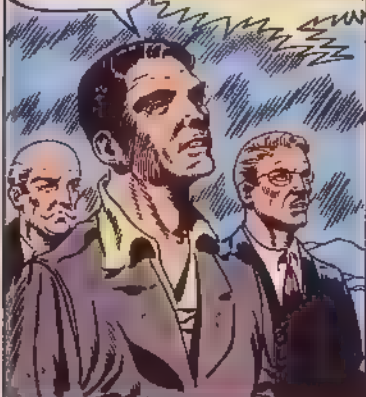
PERHAPS THEY STILL DON'T TRUST US!

I CAN'T SEE WHY!

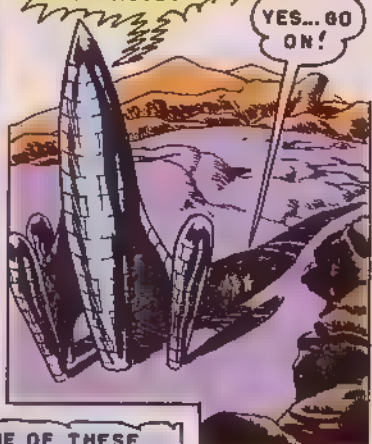


PLEASE DO! I'M SURE THEY CAN'T BE TOO STRONG!

THEY ARE! LET US SEE IF WE CAN GIVE YOU AN ILLUSTRATION! SUPPOSE...



SUPPOSE YOUR RACE WAS FAR ADVANCED IN ATOMICS... MORE SO THAN YOU CLAIMED YOU ARE IN OUR RADIO CONTACTS!



SUPPOSE THAT ONE DAY...IN ONE OF YOUR ATOMIC LABORATORIES...

GOOD LORD! LOOK AT THAT RADIATION READING!

THERE'S A LEAK SOMEWHERE! WE'VE ALL BEEN EXPOSED!



SUPPOSE THAT LATER ON, ONE OF THESE SCIENTISTS THAT WAS EXPOSED TO THE RADIATIONS BECAME A FATHER...

DOCTOR! WHAT IS IT? YOU'RE WHITE AS A SHEET! MY WIFE! MY WIFE IS...

NO, ALEX! YOUR WIFE IS FINE! IT... IT'S THE...THE BABY!



THE NEW FATHER WAS SHOWN HIS INFANT CHILD...

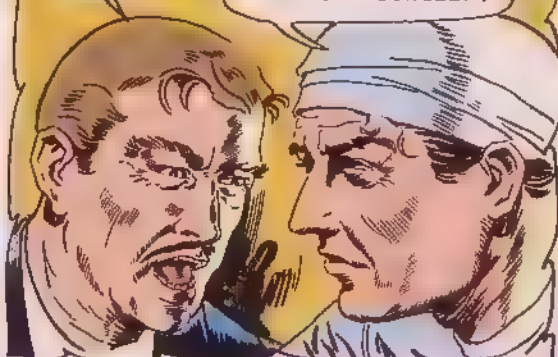
OH, MY GOD!

I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY, ALEX! IT...IT MAY NOT LIVE...



THE BABY IS DEAD!

NO! THE BABY IS ALIVE! BUT...BUT...WELL...WHY NOT SEE FOR YOURSELF!



AND THEN, LATER ON, A SECOND SCIENTIST THAT HAD ALSO BEEN EXPOSED TO THESE RADIATIONS BECAME A FATHER...

YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE HOLD OF YOURSELF! THESE THINGS HAPPEN!

BUT DID YOU SEE IT? IT'S HIDEOUS! HIDEOUS!





'AND SUPPOSE A THIRD MONSTROSITY WAS BORN TO ANOTHER OF THE SCIENTISTS THAT HAD WORKED IN THE SAME PLANT...'

THEY WARNED US NOT TO HAVE A CHILD! THEY TOLD ME ABOUT ALEX'S AND HERMAN'S...

THIS PROVES IT!



THESE...THESE THINGS ARE ATOMIC MUTANTS! THE RADIATION'S CAUSED THEM!

LORD! LOOK AT IT! IT...IT'S DISGUSTING!



SUPPOSE THE THREE MUTANTS WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR PARENTS AND SENT TO THE GOVERNMENT LABORATORIES TO BE STUDIED...

TAKE THIS DOWN, JENNINGS! DESCRIPTION OF ATOMIC MUTANT...LAB REPORT NUMBER ONE-SEVEN-FIVE-FOUR! AGE...ONE YEAR...



MUTANT HAS AN OVERSIZED BULBOUS HEAD! VISUAL ORGANS ARE TINY AND DEEP SET... COVERED WITH A SLIMY LIQUID! BETWEEN THE VISUAL ORGANS, A LARGE POINTED OLFACTORY ORGAN EXTENDS OUTWARD SHARPLY! AT THE FAR END OF THIS PROBOSCIS ARE TWO LARGE VENTS FRINGED WITH FINE CILIA! BELOW THIS, A TREMENDOUS CAVITY LINED WITH MUCOUS MEMBRANE CONTAINING A PROTRUSIBLE ORGAN COVERED WITH TINY WART-LIKE GROWTHS!



HARD, BONY APPENDAGES OF VARIOUS SHAPES JUT FROM THIS CAVITY AT ITS EXTREME EDGES...TOP AND BOTTOM! MUTANT'S HIDE IS POROUS AND COVERED WITH SLENDER, THREAD-LIKE FILAMENTS! HIDE COARSE AND THICK! FREQUENTLY HIDE BECOMES DRENCHED WITH FOUL-SMELLING ACIDS WHICH OOZE FROM POROUS OPENINGS! OTHER LIQUIDS OOZE FROM OLFACTORY ORGAN AND MUCOUS-MEMBRANED CAVITY!

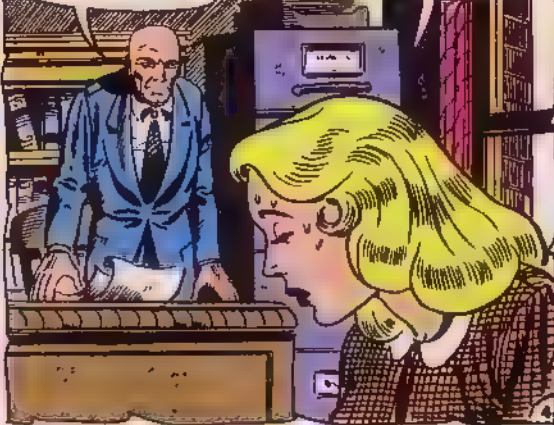


BODY OF MUTANT IS SHORT AND CYLINDRICAL WITH FOUR TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGES! EACH TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGE HAS SEVERAL ADDITIONAL TRIPLE-SECTIONED APPENDAGES PROTRUDING FROM IT! THESE END APPENDAGES ARE EACH ARMED WITH A HORNY SCALE RESEMBLING A TALON!



MOVEMENTS OF MUTANT ARE AWKWARD AND...AND... JENNINGS! WHAT'S WRONG?

I...I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD, DOCTOR!





**SUPPOSE THE GOVERNMENT  
LABORATORIES RAISED THE  
MUTANTS...STUDYING THEM CLOSELY...**

**MUTANTS ARE CARNIVOROUS...  
FEEDING ON OTHER FORMS  
OF ANIMAL LIFE FOR  
SUSTENANCE!**

**UGH!**

BEER  
15¢

**MUTANTS HAVE LITTLE  
INTELLIGENCE! APPEAR  
SELFISH...RUTHLESS...  
SADISTIC...EGOTISTICAL...**

**NAUSEATING!**

**MUTANTS' MAIN LIFE-DRIVE  
APPEARS TO BE REPRODUCTION!  
OTHER DRIVES ARE  
SUBSERVIENT  
TO THIS!**

**HOW  
PRIMITIVE!**

**MUTANTS APPEAR TO DESPISE  
AND MALTREAT LIFE-FORMS  
INFERIOR TO THEIR OWN! IT  
IS POSSIBLE THAT THEY WOULD,  
IF THEY COULD, KILL US!**

**THEY SHOULD  
BE DESTROYED!  
BEFORE THERE  
ARE TOO MANY  
OF THEM!**

**THE LOUDSPEAKER IN THE GLEAMING SKY-GIANT  
DRONED ON...**

**WE HOPE YOU CAN UNDERSTAND,  
THEREFORE, WHY WE ARE  
LEAVING!**

**FRANKLY, NO!  
WE FORMED A  
MENTAL PICTURE  
OF THESE MONSTERS  
AS YOU WERE  
DESCRIBING  
THEM, BUT...**

**...WE DON'T SEE HOW YOUR  
ILLUSTRATION IN ANY WAY  
EXPLAINS WHY YOU NO LONGER  
DESIRE TO MAKE PHYSICAL  
CONTACT WITH US!**

**STAND  
BACK!**

**A BLAST OF SMOKE AND FLAME EXPLODED FROM  
THE ROCKET TUBES OF THE ALIEN CRAFT...SENDING  
THE FOUR WELCOMING SCIENTISTS SCURRYING TO  
SAFETY...**

**GOOD  
LORD!**

**CRAZY  
IDIOTS!**

**GOOD-BYE,  
EARTHLINGS!**

ONE SCIENTIST CUPPED HIS HANDS TO HIS MOUTH... SHOUTING ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE ROCKETS...

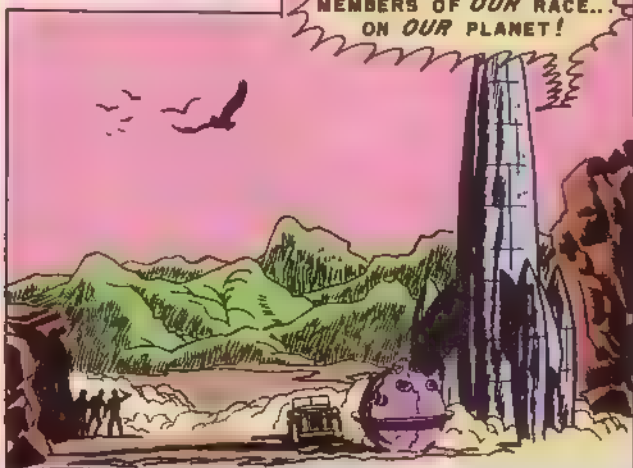
I DON'T SEE WHAT THESE *DISGUSTING* MUTANT MONSTERS HAVE TO DO WITH US!

THE MUTANTS WE TOLD YOU ABOUT *ACTUALLY* WERE BORN!



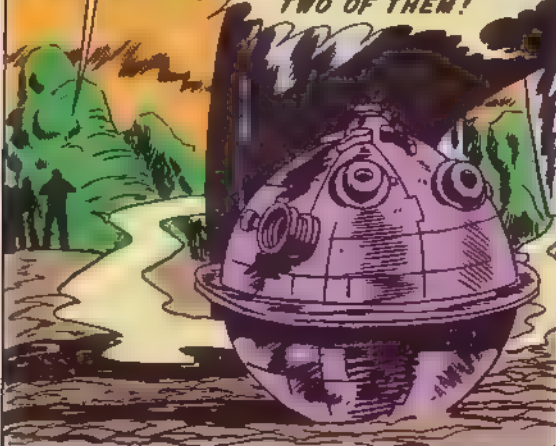
THE SHIP TREMBLED...

THEY WERE BORN TO MEMBERS OF OUR RACE... ON OUR PLANET!



SO WHAT?

SEE FOR YOURSELF! THAT CAPSULE CONTAINS TWO OF THEM!

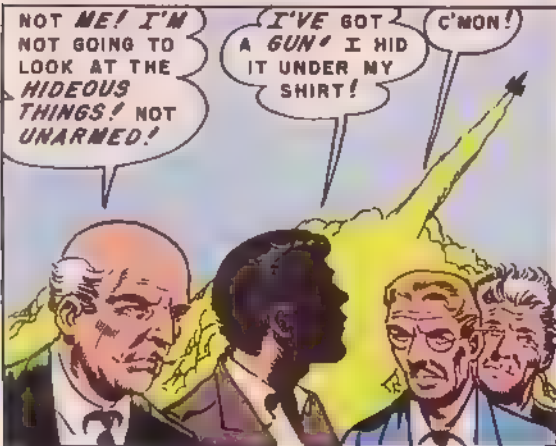


THE SCIENTISTS WATCHED THE GRAY TRAIL OF ROCKET EXHAUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE BLUE...

NOT ME! I'M NOT GOING TO LOOK AT THE *HIDEOUS* THINGS! NOT UNARMED!

I'VE GOT A GUN! I HID IT UNDER MY SHIRT!

C'MON!

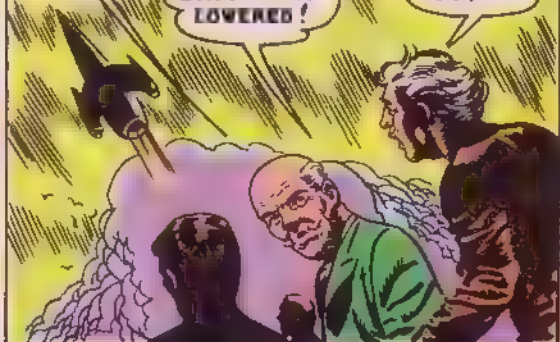


THE ROAR WAS DEAFENING! THE SHIP SHUDDERED...RISING INTO THE SKY ABOVE THE SANDS OF NEW MEXICO...SLOWLY! THEN...FASTER AND FASTER...

CAPSULE?

THAT METAL BALL THEY LOWERED!

THERE THEY GO!



THE METAL BALL WAS MADE UP OF TWO HEMISPHERES! A TOUCH OF A BUTTON RELEASED THEM AND THEY FELL APART...

GOOD LORD! A MAN... THE 'HORRIBLE MUTANTS' AND A WOMAN! THEY DESCRIBED...THEY'RE HUMAN BEINGS!



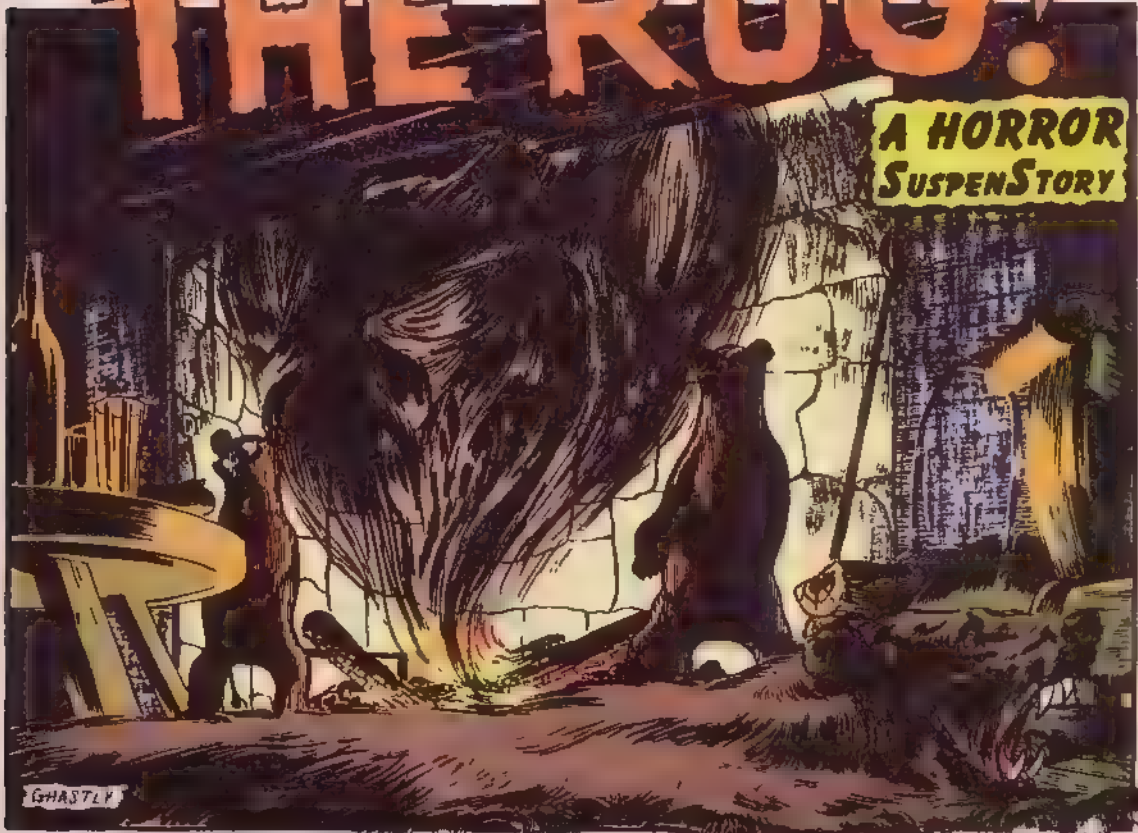
THE END



HERE IS A STORY, TINGED WITH HORROR, WITH A STARTLING  
BLOOD-CURDLING CLIMAX!

# THE RUG!

A HORROR  
SUSPENSE STORY



GHASTLY

CONRAD CARTWRIGHT, THE WEALTHY SOCIALITE SPORTSMAN, UNLOCKED THE DOOR OF HIS IMPOSING NORTHWOODS RETREAT AND SWUNG IT OPEN! HE STEPPED ASIDE, ALLOWING HIS SUAVE, MILD-MANNERED COMPANION TO ENTER...

WELL, REGGIE? THIS IS IT! HOW DO YOU LIKE IT?

HMMMM! VERY ATTRACTIVE, CONNIE! BUT WE'RE MILES FROM CIVILIZATION UP HERE! WHAT IN HEAVENS ARE WE GOING TO DO FOR AMUSEMENT?

CONRAD SMILED AT HIS DEBONAÏR PLAY-BOY GUEST AS HE CLOSED THE DOOR...

IT'LL DO YOU GOOD TO GET AWAY FROM THE SOCIAL WHIRL FOR A WHILE, REGGIE! THERE'S PLENTY TO DO AROUND HERE! FISHING... HUNTING...

HUNTING!?! UGH! HOW DISGUSTING!



CONRAD LIT ONE OF THE POLISHED KEROSENE LAMPS SCATTERED ABOUT THE LODGE AND THE ROOM GLOWED CHEERILY...

OH... COME, COME, REGGIE! YOU'RE NOT SQUEEMISH ABOUT HUNTING, ARE YOU?

I ABHOR IT! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DO THAT TO YOUR VICTIMS!



REGGIE POINTED A WELL-MANICURED FINGER AT A LARGE BEAR-SKIN RUG THAT LAY BEFORE THE FIELD-STONE FIRE-PLACE! THE HEAD OF THE UNFORTUNATE BEAR STARED BACK AT HIM WITH UNSEEING EYES...FANGS BARED...

WHAT? SKIN THEM AND MAKE RUGS OUT OF THEM? WHY A RUG LIKE THAT IS WORTH A FORTUNE!

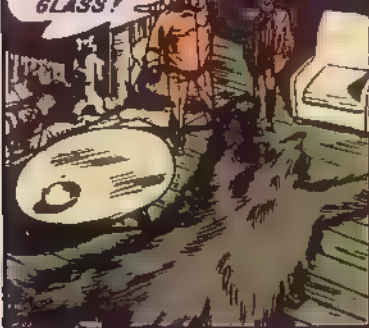
IT'S HORRIBLE! LOOK AT THE POOR CREATURE'S EYES!



REGGIE SHUDDERED AS HE GAZED AT THE BEAR-SKIN RUG! CONRAD BEGAN TO LAUGH...

OH, REALLY NOW, REGGIE! THAT BEAR-SKIN'S BEEN TANNED AND THE HEAD STUFFED! THOSE EYES ARE JUST GLASS!

OH? WELL, THEY DO LOOK SO... SO ALIVE!



HOW'D YOU LIKE TO OWN A RUG LIKE THAT?

YOU MEAN YOU'RE OFFERING IT TO ME?



OH, NO! NOT THAT ONE! WE'LL GO OUT TOMORROW AND GET YOU ONE!

NO, THANK YOU! I'D RATHER NOT HAVE ONE, THEN!



DON'T WORRY, REGGIE! I'LL DO THE SHOOTING AND SKINNING! YOU JUST COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE!

WELL, I... THAT IS...



TOMORROW MORNING! BRIGHT AND EARLY! I'LL WAKE YOU! NOW I THINK WE OUGHT TO HIT THE HAY! IT'S GETTING LATE!

LATE? IT'S ONLY TEN-FIFTEEN! BACK IN NEW YORK THINGS ARE JUST GETTING WARMED UP AT THIS HOUR!





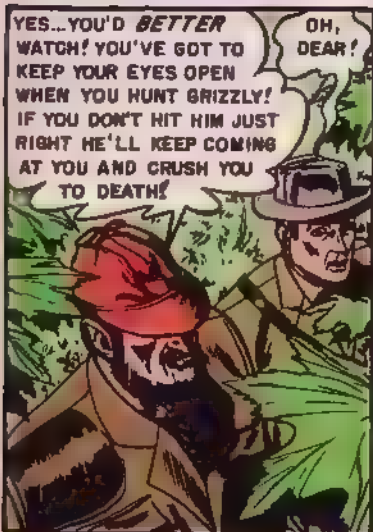
THE NEXT MORNING, SHORTLY AFTER SUNRISE, CONRAD AND REGGIE STEPPED FROM THE CABIN INTO THE STILL DEW-LADEN GRASS AND BEGAN MOVING INTO THE THICK WOODS ALONG AN OVER-GROWN TRAIL ...

UGH! WHAT A GOD-FORSAKEN HOUR TO BE PULLED OUT OF BED! I'M STILL HALF ASLEEP!

YOU'LL WAKE UP QUICK ENOUGH... SOON AS YOU SPOT A GRIZZLY!

GOOD HEAVENS, CONNIE! WILL I HAVE TO WATCH YOU KILL THE POOR THING?

POOR THING! THAT'S A LAUGH! ONE OF THOSE BABIES WEIGH OVER A THOUSAND POUNDS!



YES...YOU'D BETTER WATCH! YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN WHEN YOU HUNT GRIZZLY! IF YOU DON'T HIT HIM JUST RIGHT HE'LL KEEP COMING AT YOU AND CRUSH YOU TO DEATH!

OH, DEAR!

YOU'VE HEARD THE EXPRESSION, "BEAR-HUG"! WELL, A BEAR'S HUG IS NO SIGN OF AFFECTION! IT USUALLY KILLS YOU!

I... I DON'T THINK I'D LIKE ONE OF THOSE RUGS AFTER ALL, CONNIE! LET'S...

A MOVEMENT IN THE THICKET AHEAD OF THEM CAUGHT CONRAD CARTWRIGHT'S EYE...

SH-H-N-HH-H! I THINK I SEE ONE!

GULP!



THE LUMBERING BROWN HULK NOSED OUT INTO THE OPEN! IT STOPPED AS IT CAUGHT THE HUMAN SCENT! IT TURNED...STUDYING THE TWO HUNTERS WITH ITS TINY BLACK BEADY EYES! CONRAD SLID THE BOLT OF HIS RIFLE HOME...

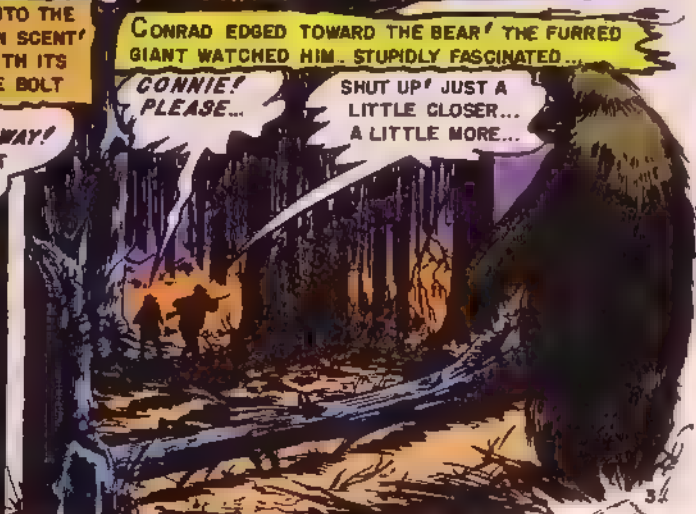
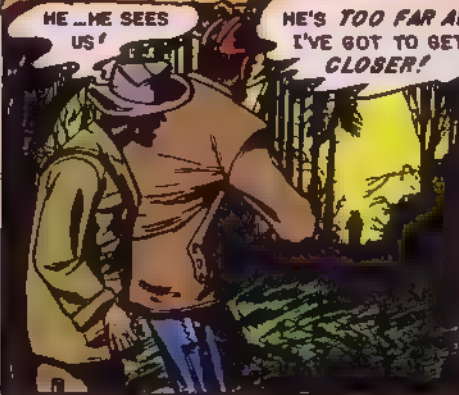
HE...HE SEES US!

HE'S TOO FAR AWAY! I'VE GOT TO GET CLOSER!

CONRAD EDGED TOWARD THE BEAR! THE FURRED GIANT WATCHED HIM. STUPIDLY FASCINATED...

CONNIE! PLEASE...

SHUT UP! JUST A LITTLE CLOSER... A LITTLE MORE...





A LOW GROWL RUMBLED OUT OF THE BEAR'S THROAT, WARNING THE HUMANS TO KEEP BACK! CONRAD LIFTED HIS RIFLE TO HIS SHOULDER...

NOW!



THE SHOT EXPLODED THROUGH THE SILENT FOREST! THE BEAR TUMBLED OVER, HOWLING IN PAIN! CONRAD CURSED...

BLAST IT! GET BACK, REGGIE! I MISSED THE VITAL SPOT! HE'S GOING TO CHARGE!



THE GRIZZLY STUMBLED FORWARD...UP ONTO ITS HIND LEGS! ITS BEADY EYES FLAMED RED AS IT RUSHED AT THE TWO MEN...



MY GOD, CONRAD! SHOOT, SHOOT!

CONRAD WAITED UNTIL THE BEAR WAS ALMOST UPON HIM! CAREFULLY HE SIGHTED ALONG THE GLEAMING BLACK BARREL OF HIS EXPENSIVE RIFLE...THEN...



THE BEAR TRIPPED FORWARD ON ITS FACE, SKIDDING TO A STOP ALMOST AT CONRAD'S FEET! HE SMILED DOWN AT IT...

HE'S A BEAUTY, REGGIE... A REAL BEAUTY!

I FEEL SICK!



CONRAD UNSHEATHED HIS HUNTING KNIFE AND BENT OVER THE DEAD ANIMAL...

HE'S GOING TO MAKE A TREMENDOUS RUG, REGGIE! HE...HE...REGGIE?



CONRAD LAUGHED AT REGGIE CLINGING BEHIND THE NEARBY TREE...REETCHING! THEN HE CALMLY PROCEEDED TO SKIN THE BEAR...

HEH, HEH! S'MATTER, REGGIE? EXCITEMENT TOO MUCH FOR YOU? HEH...HEH...





THAT EVENING, BACK AT THE HUNTING LODGE, REGGIE AND CONRAD SAT BEFORE A ROARING FIRE...

I SEE THE COLOR'S FINALLY COME BACK INTO YOUR CHEEKS, REGGIE!

I FEEL A LITTLE BETTER, NOW!



GOT THE SKIN IN THE ICE-HOUSE. REGGIE! THAT'LL KEEP IT FROM ROTTING TILL WE CAN GET IT TO A TAXIDER-MIST!

PLEASE! CONNIE! I'D RATHER NOT HAVE IT!



DON'T BE SILLY, REGGIE! WHY NOT?

IT'S HORRIBLE... INHUMAN!



OH, CLIMB OFF IT, REGGIE! IT'S DONE EVERY DAY! LOTS OF PEOPLE HUNT AND SKIN THEIR KILLS!

IT OUGHT TO BE STOPPED! IT'S BARBARIC!



CONRAD WATCHED REGGIE MOVE DOWN THE HALL AND ENTER HIS BEDROOM! HE LISTENED FOR THE SNAP OF THE LOCK! THEN HE LIT A CIGARETTE AND SMILED AS HE STARED INTO THE DYING FIRE...

HEH, HEH! REGGIE'S A REAL CHARACTER...SO TOUGHY... SO PRUDISH! THINKS BEAR-SKIN RUGS SHOULD BE OUT-LAWED! HAH! WHAT A RIOT!



WELL, I DON'T SEE ANYTHING WRONG IN IT! IF YOU DON'T WANT THE BEAR SKIN RUG, I'LL KEEP IT FOR MYSELF!

I... I'M TIRED, CONRAD! I THINK I'LL GO TO BED! GOOD NIGHT!



CONRAD SAT FOR A WHILE MUSING TO HIMSELF! HIS HEAD NODDED SLEEPILY...HIS EYELIDS GREW HEAVY...

MIGHT AS WELL...YAWN... TURN IN! GETTING TIRED... HO, HUM...SLEEPY!





SUDDENLY THE SILENCE OUTSIDE THE CABIN WAS SHATTERED WITH AN EAR-SPLITTING ROAR! CONRAD JUMPED UP...REACHING INSTINCTIVELY FOR HIS RIFLE STANDING IN THE GUN-CASE...

WHAT THE...? WHAT WAS THAT?  
SOUNDED LIKE A GRIZZLY!



CARTWRIGHT PEERED THROUGH THE CABIN WINDOW! OUTSIDE, THE NIGHT WAS THICK AND BLACK! HE SHIELDED OUT THE GLARE OF THE FIRELIGHT...HIS GAZE SEARCHING THE SHADOWS OF THE CLEARING THAT SURROUNDED THE LODGE...

CAN'T MAKE OUT ANYTHING!



CONRAD SPUN AROUND! ON THE MANTLE OF THE FIREPLACE STOOD A POWERFUL BATTERY LANTERN! HE SNATCHED IT...FLICKED IT ON... FLUNG OPEN THE DOOR...AND SENT ITS POWERFUL BEAM KNIFING OFF INTO THE GLOOM...

WHAT'S THAT? SOMETHING  
SHINING OUT THERE!



THE HUNTER MOVED TOWARD THE GLEAMING OBJECT...HIS GUN READY...

LOOKS LIKE...  
LOOKS LIKE...



THE LANTERN BEAM ILLUMINATED THE OBJECT MORE AND MORE AS CARTWRIGHT NEARED IT! SOON HE COULD MAKE OUT ITS SHAPE QUITE CLEARLY...

IT IS! IT'S A  
HUNTING KNIFE!



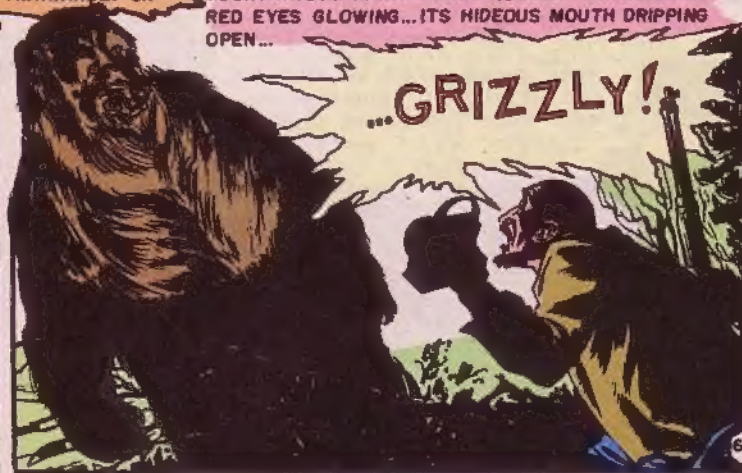
SUDDENLY A HUGE HAIRY PAW, CLAWS BARED, REACHED INTO THE CIRCLE OF LIGHT, CLOSING AWKWARDLY ON THE HUNTING KNIFE...

GOOD LORD!  
A...A...



CARTWRIGHT SWUNG THE LIGHT OVER! THE BLACK MOUNTAINOUS HAIRY BEAST LOOMED UP...ITS TINY RED EYES GLOWING...ITS HIDEOUS MOUTH DRIPPING OPEN...

...GRIZZLY!





CONRAD DROPPED HIS LANTERN... THE BEAM TILTING CRAZILY! THE SAVAGE GRIZZLY MOVED TOWARD HIM! HE RAISED HIS GUN, BUT...



FOR A MOMENT, CONRAD SHRANK BACK... HORROR CRAWLING UP HIS SPINE! THEN HE TURNED TO RUN! THE BEAR UTTERED A LOW-THROATED SNARL AND SPRANG AT HIM...



THE HUGE BEAST ENCIRCLED THE STRUGGLING HUNTER WITH ITS GIGANTIC PAWS... CRUSHING THE AIR FROM HIS LUNGS...



CONRAD SLIPPED TO THE GROUND... THE BLACKNESS CLOSING IN! JUST BEFORE HE DRIFTED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS, HE FELT A STINGING PAIN IN HIS CHEST AS THE KNIFE CUT THROUGH... RIPPING DOWN... AND ACROSS...



IN HIS ROOM, REGGIE STARTED FROM A SOUND SLEEP! HE SAT UP, STARING INTO THE DARKNESS...



WHAT... WHAT IN BLAZES WAS THAT? SOUNDED LIKE A SCREAM!

REGGIE RUSHED DOWN THE HALL INTO THE CABIN LIVING-ROOM! THE FIRE STILL GLOWED FAINTLY... CASTING ITS EERIE GLOW ON THE BEAR-SKIN RUG BEFORE IT! BUT NEARBY... BELOW THE CHAIR THAT CONRAD CARTWRIGHT HAD FALLEN ASLEEP IN... WAS ANOTHER SKIN-RUG... A NEW ONE...

GOOD LORD! CONRAD!

